



**Technical Advisory Review Panel | *Green Infrastructure Working Group***

## **Austin Roadmap for Advancing Green Infrastructure in the Right-of-Way**

Facilitated by Austin Transportation & Public Works

September/October 2025

*This report is a product of the Technical Advisory Review Panel (TARP) – Green Infrastructure Working Group*



# WHY Street Trees Matter in Austin

Austin's streets are critical public spaces that must balance safety, utility reliability, and climate resilience. **Street trees are vital infrastructure to achieving that balance.**

**This initiative reframes trees as essential public infrastructure and integrates them into planning, utility coordination, permitting, and design from the outset so that tree needs are consistently addressed to deliver safer, healthier, and more resilient streets for all Austinites.**

## Benefits of Street Trees

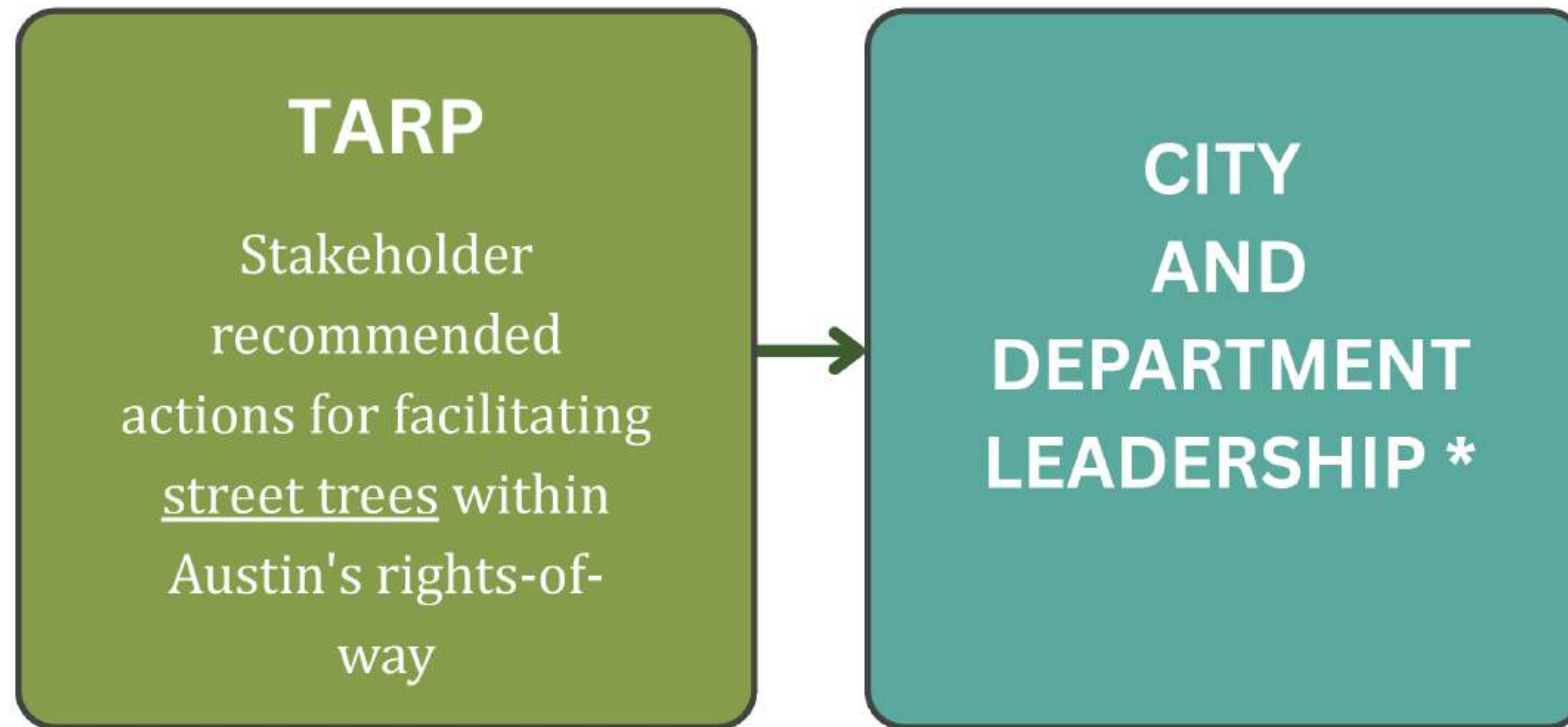


## Council Resolution No 20240321-039

- Review and identify barriers to installation and maintenance of green infrastructure
- Develop recommendations for modifying existing codes, criteria manuals, and regulations
- Coordinate with relevant departments to align standard and practices with the goal of enhancing green infrastructure
- Work with the Technical Advisory Review Panel (TARP)

## Process

*These recommendations are a product of the Technical Advisory Review Panel (TARP)*



*\*Staff review and evaluation of TARP recommendations are ongoing*

## Technical Advisory Review Panel *Green Infrastructure Working Group*

### Department Staff:

- Austin Development Services
- Austin Energy
- Austin Parks and Recreation
- Austin Planning
- Austin Transit Partnership
- Austin Transportation and Public Works
- Austin Water
- Austin Watershed Protection

### Development Professionals:

- Arborholic
- Bartlett
- Coleman and Associates
- Entellus
- HNTB
- Lionheart
- McCann Adams Studio
- Nora Engineering
- Stanley Studios
- TBG Partners

### Consultant Team:

- AECOM
- Urbinden



**REGULATORY BARRIERS**

Involve the rules, codes, and standards that restrict or complicate green infrastructure in the right-of-way

**PERMITTING BARRIERS**

Involve challenges in securing approvals, permits, and meeting requirements

**PROGRAMMATIC BARRIERS**

Relate to institutional challenges such as coordination, structure, and resource allocation

**REGULATORY FOUNDATIONS**

Policy and manual updates to remove obstacles and support right-of-way design frameworks

**PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS**

Streamline permits and procedures for easier green infrastructure implementation

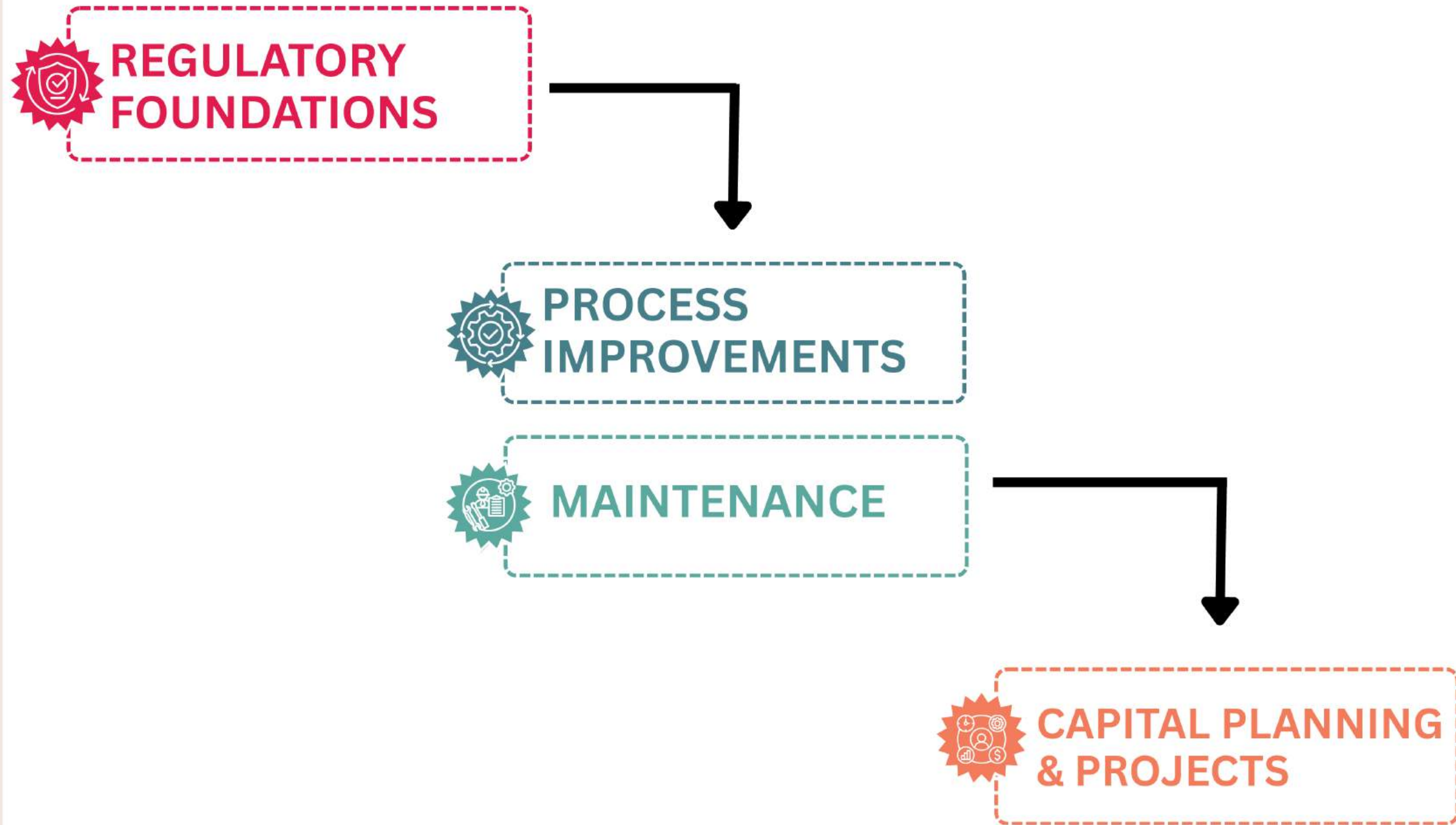
**MAINTENANCE**

Establish funding, tools, and procedures for ongoing management of assets

**CAPITAL PLANNING & PROJECTS**

Integrate green infrastructure into capital projects and improvement plans

# TARP-RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE





**Transportation/Right-of-Way Criteria Manual**

Centralized right-of-way design manual, including administrative requirements for the sidewalk corridor and coordination of required right-of-way components.

**Utility Criteria Manual**

Establishes infrastructure engineering requirements and utility protection criteria.

**Standards Manual**

Repository for standard details, specifications, and product lists.

**Environmental Criteria Manual - Appendix F**

Establishes species approved for use as street trees and near overhead powerlines. Provides applicants with species selection guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

**#1**

**Expand and Update the Transportation Criteria Manual to Regulate the Provision of Street Trees and Holistically Coordinate Components within the Right-of-Way**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 1a** Expand and reposition the TCM as the Right-of-Way Design Manual, providing guidance on how components within the right-of-way should be holistically coordinated, including components below, above, and at streetscape level
- 1b** Clarify that as a component of the sidewalk corridor, street tree compliance will be guided by the TCM
- 1c** Use 2D and 3D graphics to illustrate how various elements of the right-of-way should be coordinated to accommodate planting zones and trees within the sidewalk corridor
- 1d** Include requirements for minimum soil volumes and root barriers
- 1e** Ensure that standards provide built-in flexibility to address common constraints to allow for preapproved alternative designs

RECOMMENDATION

**#2**

**Update the Standards Manual with Comprehensive Details, Specifications, and Product Lists for Street Tree Installations in Standard and Substandard Conditions**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 2a** Develop standard details for street tree installations that can be permitted without case-by-case departmental review
- 2b** Standard details should reflect real-world constraints and address other relevant Utility Criteria Manual (UCM) and Transportation Criteria Manual (TCM) requirements
- 2c** Adopt preapproved product lists for irrigation, drainage structural cells, and other equipment



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RECOMMENDATION

#3

**Update Utility Design Criteria Manual and Other Design Criteria to Allow for Street Trees**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 3a Update spacing requirements and adopt space-efficient utility practices that allow for tree zones
- 3b Coordinate with TCM updates to establish assigned utility corridors
- 3c Reduce minimum separation requirements for underground utilities where risks are lower

RECOMMENDATION

#4

**Update Approved Tree Species List**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 4a Expand street tree species options considering shade, climate resilience, and adaptability
- 4b Provide guidance for constrained and infrastructure-heavy locations, including options based on right-of-way width, soil volume needs, root behavior near utilities, and suitability beneath overhead lines

RECOMMENDATION

#5

**Update City Code to Require Street Trees**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 5a Require street trees as component of the sidewalk corridor (triggered with frontage improvements)
- 5b Point to the Transportation Criteria Manual for implementation guidance
- 5c Enable relief pathways for constraints



**Austin Development Services**  
*Leads development review workflows. Manages public-facing education.*

**Austin Transportation & Public Works**  
*Reviews right-of-way improvements with authority for resolving conflicts and making determinations in the right-of-way.*

**Right-of-Way Stakeholder Departments**  
*Provide technical criteria and support conflict resolution surrounding their assets in the right-of-way.*

RECOMMENDATION **#6** **Modify Development Review Workflows/Timelines with Early Right-of-Way Evaluation and Conflict Resolution**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 6a** Establish an early-stage ROW improvement review process
- 6b** Establish a team conflict resolution process, with escalated decision-making for ROW led by TPW

RECOMMENDATION **#7** **Provide Training on Process and Regulatory Changes to Better Facilitate Green Infrastructure**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 7a** Staff and applicant training opportunities on new rules and processes
- 7b** Provide quick-reference educational materials



**Austin Transportation & Public Works**

*Leads process changes and manages crews for street tree planting, pruning, irrigation, and replacement. Manages the citywide street tree inventory and*

**Austin Climate Action and Resilience**

*Aligns the street tree inventory with equity, canopy coverage, and climate resilience goals.*

RECOMMENDATION

**#8**

**Eliminate License Agreement Requirements for Street Trees**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 8a** Remove license agreement requirement for new street trees and related elements
- 8b** Phaseout of existing license agreements for street trees

RECOMMENDATION

**#9**

**Assume City-Led Maintenance for Trees in the Right-of-Way**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 9a** Transition existing and new street trees to city asset management
- 9b** Secure dedicated funding source for ongoing, regular tree maintenance

RECOMMENDATION

**#10**

**Conduct a Street Tree Inventory to Identify Gaps and Condition, and to Support Maintenance, Inspection, and Other Operational Needs**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 10a** Create a citywide street tree inventory and asset management system
- 10b** Include preliminary condition assessment to guide maintenance tracking
- 10c** Integrate new trees from private development and capital projects into inventory



**Austin Transportation & Public Works**

*Leads street tree program planning and development.*

**Austin Energy, Austin Water, and Austin Watershed Protection**

*Help identify opportunities to align infrastructure investments.*

**Austin Climate Action and Resilience**

*Aligns street tree investment plan with equity, canopy coverage, and climate resilience goals.*

**Austin Capital Delivery Services**

*Integrates street tree requirements into capital projects.*

RECOMMENDATION  
**#11** | **Develop a Green Infrastructure Investment Plan**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 11a** Develop a programmatic plan to guide tree infill across the city
- 11b** Coordinate major interdepartmental investments to leverage shared CIP needs
- 11c** Establish priorities and identify funding sources
- 11d** Develop programmatic targets/goals for tree infill

RECOMMENDATION  
**#12** | **Incorporate Street Trees into Baseline Scope and Budgets for Capital Projects**

**Nested Recommendations:**

- 12a** Establish street trees as baseline infrastructure in capital projects
- 12b** Consider exceptions for resource constrained infill programs, such as sidewalks and urban trails
- 12c** Maximize interdepartmental cost-sharing opportunities

**\*\* Additional scope requirements for capital projects may result in additional project funding needs or a reduction to extents that can be delivered \*\***

## Outreach Schedule

Date	Meeting
Sep 18, 2025	Mobility Committee
Oct 1, 2025	Environmental Commission
Oct 7, 2025	Urban Transportation Commission
Oct 15, 2025	Water Wastewater Commission
Oct 20, 2025	Electric Utility Commission
Oct 22, 2025	Sustainability Commission
Oct 27, 2025	Design Commission